



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1511 14,000 Rd, P.O. Box 368, Altamont, KS 67330
866-784-5500
www.twinvalleyelectric.coop

TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP

NEWS

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Office Hours

Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Contact Us

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Co-op Connections

Use your Co-op Connections card at Riggs Drug located in Chetopa for a 10 percent discount on over-the-counter medications

FROM THE CEO

Stay Focused on Safety During Harvest

During harvest season, many farmers reap the benefits of advancement in agricultural technology. With the help of GPS auto-steer devices, farmers are able to decrease driver error and maximize productivity. Despite these advances, safety risks remain. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low-light conditions, which enhances productivity.

It's important to remember that farm machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents.

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the farm equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action if necessary.

Regardless the technology used on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- ▶ Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- ▶ Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines at all times, in all directions.
- ▶ Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- ▶ Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- ▶ Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead power lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- ▶ If a power line is sagging, contact Twin Valley Electric Cooperative.



Ron Holsteen

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911 and Twin Valley (866-784-5500), warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Co-op Welcomes New Addition

ADAM and **KAYAN MYERS** are the proud parents of **ALICE** born on June 16, 2016. Alice weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 21 inches long. She is welcomed home by big brother, Corbin.

Adam is a Journeyman Lineman for Twin Valley Electric Cooperative. Congratulations to Adam and Kayan!



The Myers family from left: Corbin-Adam, Alice and Kayan.

Tip of the Month

Insulating your water heater tank could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 4 to 9 percent in water heating costs. Pre-cut jackets or blankets are available for around \$20. **Source: energy.gov**

Office Closed on Labor Day

Twin Valley Electric will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen Tuesday, Sept. 6, with normal business hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

NOTES FROM OPERATIONS

Conservation Tips to Beat the Heat

In the midst of summertime heat, electricity usage is a concern for every household. Do you fear opening your bill and seeing it double or even triple compared to the prior months? We understand.

Imagine everything that your electric meter serves. Now imagine what it would be like not to have those items. No lights, no air conditioning, no computer, no television, no refrigeration, etc. Can you imagine the look on your teenager's face if he could not charge his mobile phone? Oh, the horror of not being able to text the person sitting beside you.

All of these things dependent on electricity add up. Take a look around your house and note things that are plugged in, but not actually on. Let's look at a lamp versus a television. A lamp with an incandescent bulb completes a circuit when it is turned on. The closed circuit draws amperage and the light is on. When the lamp is turned off, the circuit is open. No amperage draw, no light.

The TV is another story. Even though the set is not on, a computer brain is in there remembering your preset channels, volume settings, etc. The same happens with your computer and other electronics. Anything that has a digital clock—coffee maker, stove, microwave, stereo—is also a constant draw. Your mobile phone charger is basically a tiny transformer that converts the 120v in your house to the usable voltage needed by your mobile phone. This device, as long as it is plugged into the wall socket, will perform this task regardless whether it is plugged into the phone. Electronic devices such as this can comprise 5-10 percent of your monthly electric bill.

Now, let's talk air conditioning. With temperatures consistently at,

or near, triple digits, people are concerned about their usage. In hopes of keeping costs down, most people end up doing things that hurt, not help to produce savings or lower costs, or example, closing off vents to unused areas of your house. If you have a properly sized central air conditioning unit, your unit should be roughly one (1) ton per 500 square feet of living space. This calculation and installation provides for the adequate exchange of air to cool your house the most efficiently.

If you start closing off vents to parts of your house, you are decreasing the square footage the unit is designed to cool. This leads to an inadequate exchange of air. The air being brought in is not dried out; therefore, moist air is being pushed back into the house. The moist air does not provide the comfort of dry air and people tend to keep pushing the thermostat down in attempt to make the house comfortable. This actually will cost you more in the long run. Also, check your windows, doors, and especially your attic hatch for air leaks. If these are not properly insulated, you could be wasting a lot of money on a problem that is an inexpensive fix.

At Twin Valley Electric, our average monthly bill hovers around \$200. Think about that. For less than \$7 per day, your entire house is cooled, food refrigerated, lights are on, you are connected to the world wide web, and you won't miss an episode of your favorite television show.

As always, I welcome your feedback and can be emailed directly at wworthy@twinvalleyelectric.coop.



William Worthy



Co-op Youth Attend Leadership Camp

RICKY ORTIZ was selected to attend the 40th annual Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colo. from July 16-22, Ortiz joined approximately 100 youth from Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and Oklahoma for the week-long camp that combines education about the cooperative business model with traditional camp pastimes.

Ortiz was selected through application, quiz and interview process.

“Twin Valley Electric Cooperative is proud to be a participating sponsor of the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp and send our local youth to develop essential leadership and teamwork skills,” Ron Holsteen, CEO said. “Through this trip, we hope local students will learn how our electric cooperatives work and how co-ops and their employees support the communities they serve.”

At Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, the campers participated in daily membership meetings where they established committees and elected a general manager and board of directors. Campers also had time to enjoy area activities including visits to Fish Creek Falls and Steamboat Springs, river rafting and participating in camp activities such as volleyball, swimming and a talent show.

The youth learned about the workings of electric cooperatives through a variety of activities: Yampa Valley Electric’s linemen led a high voltage safety demonstration, campers competed in building a model transmission line out of craft supplies, and they toured the Trapper Mine and Craig Power Plant.

“Learning about electricity was a really eye opening aspect of this trip,” Ortiz said “I loved camp in general and everything it has inspired me to do. It was an amazing experience.”

At the end of the camp, participants elected ambassadors from their group of peers who will return to camp next year as junior counselors. Elected to serve in that capacity are Brian Martinez, Southern Pioneer; Mitchell Porter, FreeState; and Oklahoma youth Emma Hayhurst. As ambassadors, the students will facilitate camp leadership activities and serve as role models for the incoming campers.

Overall, the campers said they left CYLC with a new sense of leadership and a basic understanding of how their local electric co-ops operate and how they contribute to the betterment of the communities they serve.

Right: Ricky Ortiz represents Twin Valley at the CYLC in July.

Below: Thirty-six students from Kansas join students from four states at the camp.



My Dream Trip to Washington, D.C.

BY HANNAH BAKER



Hannah Baker

This past June 9-16, I got the chance of a lifetime thanks to Twin Valley Electric and National Rural Electric

Cooperative Association. Because of the cooperatives, I was able to spend a week with 35 other high school juniors from all around Kansas and four from Hawaii, as well as juniors from 43 other states to tour our nation's capital for the 2016 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

First, I want to thank our Twin Valley Board of Directors for giving me this opportunity, and I want to thank all the Twin Valley members who made the trip possible. Second, I want to thank my parents, Connie and Bruce Baker, and my older brother, Bryce, for supporting my decision to apply for the Youth Tour. Third, I want to thank Alex Orel, manager of government relations at Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC); Darrin Lynch, general manager at Western Cooperative Electric, and wife Tricia Lynch; and Shana Read, director of communications at KEC, for being the best chaperones on the Youth Tour as well as our "aunties" and "uncles."

I am thankful that I had this amazing, life-changing opportunity. The Hawaii-Kansas Youth

Tour group visited almost every tourist site, memorial and monument in the Washington, D.C. area. From the National Archives to the Washington Nationals Park; the Smithsonian museums to Mount Vernon, home of George Washington. But more than seeing all there is to see in Washington, D.C., I was able to talk with 35 other Kansas teenagers and four Hawaii teenagers. We got to know each other in ways we would never have been able to had we not attended the Youth Tour. We became close friends and we are still in contact today!

I had a life-changing experience in Washington, D.C., and I'm a different person now. I'm more confident about being myself and about going off to college in a little over a year. Being in Washington, D.C., without my parents showed me that I can go farther away for college, and I'll be OK. Some kids may be scared to go off to college because they're worried they can't live somewhere without their parents right there with them. My parents will always be with me, whether I'm going to college one hour from home or eight hours from home, and I know I can do both, thanks to the Youth Tour.

Youth Tour gave me a boost of confidence and it changed my life for the better. I can't express how grateful I am that I received that amazing opportunity, and I'll always cherish those memories.

POKÉMON GO Safety Tips

Twin Valley Electric and other utilities are reminding players of *Pokémon Go* to stay away from electric substations, power plants, pad mount transformers and other electric equipment. The new reality game sends players to real world places to "catch" Pokémon.

Pokémon characters turn up everywhere—from grocery stores to hospitals. But they're also appearing at electric substations, drawing players into dangerous situations.

"Electric utilities cannot control where the Pokémon characters appear, and players should make sure they catch their Pokémon from a safe distance," said Ron Holsteen, Twin Valley's CEO. "Any activity that distracts people from the possible dangers around them and potentially brings them in proximity to our electric equipment and lines is a major concern for all us."

When you are on the search for Pokémon characters, avoid pad mounted transformers. These are green metal boxes that contain the above ground portion of an underground electrical installation. Pad mount transformers carry high voltages and are safe when locked, but they can be deadly if someone reaches inside. If you see one in your neighborhood that is open, call authorities and your utility immediately.

Remember these important electrical safety tips as you try to #CatchEmAll:

- ▶ Contact with any type of electric equipment, including transformers, utility poles and power lines, could put you at risk. Be safe and never touch electric equipment.
- ▶ Avoid contact with downed power lines. Always assume all lines are energized and dangerous.
- ▶ Substations carry extremely high voltages, so keep a safe distance from substations.

Here at Twin Valley your safety is important to us. We hope you will share the message of electrical safety so that you and others can enjoy outdoor activities.